

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 SAJ-01 DPW-01

DRC-01 SR-02 ORM-03 /159 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8077

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 17362

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, VN

SUBJECT: THAI-NORTH VIETNAMESE RELATIONS

SUMMARY: TALK OF IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND NORTH VIETNAM HAS RISEN A NOTCH IN RECENT DAYS. THERE APPEARS TO BE VERY LITTLE SUBSTANCE TO IT, HOWEVER. ONE NEW NEGOTIATING CHANNEL HAS OPENED, AS OFFERED BY THE CHINESE, WHILE THAT WHICH EXISTED THROUGH FORMER PRIME MINISTER PRIDI PHANOMYONG IN PARIS HAS APPARENTLY BROKEN DOWN. END SUMMARY.

1. IN THE MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING THAI-NORTH VIETNAMESE RELATIONS, THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY "BANGKOK POST" REPORTED OCTOBER 29 THAT THE PRC HAD OFFERED TO USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH HANOI TO BRING ABOUT A DETENTE BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE DRV. THIS OFFER REPORTEDLY CAME FROM CHINESE VICE MINISTER CHIAO KUAN-HUA IN THE CONTEXT OF PEKING'S OWN EFFORTS TO REACH AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THAILAND. THE "POST" REPORT WAS SOURCED TO DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN CHIAO AND THAI DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHARTCHAI CHUNHAWAN IN NEW YORK DURING CHARTCHAI'S RECENT UN VISIT. CHARTCHAI SUBSE-
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QUENTLY CONFIRMED TO THE DCM THAT CHIAO HAD MADE THIS OFFER.

2. THAI FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN ISSARANGUN NA AYUTTHAYA TOLD THE PRESS OCTOBER 25 THAT THAILAND WOULD LIKE TO OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH HANOI BUT HAD RECEIVED NO RESPONSE TO MOVES MADE EARLIER. ACCORDING TO THE "POST" COVERAGE OF CHARUNPHAN'S CONFERENCE, THE REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES TO THEIR HOMELAND WOULD BE CONDUCTED THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CHANNEL.

3. THE "POST" EARLIER PUBLISHED ON OCTOBER 13 A LETTER FROM FORMER PRIME MINISTER PRIDI PHANOMYONG WHO ANNOUNCED THAT HE WAS NO LONGER WILLING TO SERVE AS A MEDIATOR IN THE PARIS TALKS BETWEEN THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND THAI BUSINESSMEN REPRESENTING FIELD MARSHAL PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIEN. WHILE PRIDI FELT THAT SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WERE IMPORTANT, AND CALLED UPON THE RTG TO END THE STATE OF UNDECLARED WAR BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE DRV, CERTAIN INDISCRETIONS THAT A MEMBER OF THE THAI DELEGATION MADE DISTRESSED PRIDI AND OFFENDED HIS SENCE OF DIPLOMATIC PROPRIETY. PRIDI NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE RTG WAS PLANNING TO SEND A MINISTRY OF INTERIOR REPRESENTATIVE TO ASSIST IN THE TALKS. PRIDI'S LETTER DESCRIBED IN DETAIL THE STATUS OF THE TALKS THROUGH SEPTEMBER 25 AND QUOTED THE DRV CHARGE'S POSITION ON RELATIONS WITH THE THAI. THE DRV ASKED THAILAND TO HALT COOPERATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES IN HOSTILE ACTS AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF INDO-CHINA AND TO ADHERE STRICTLY TO THE RED CROSS AGREEMENT.

4. THE "POST" IN AN OCTOBER 13 EDITORIAL ENTITLED "TIME TO TALK WITH HANOI" PROPOSED THAT THE RTG CONSIDER EXTENDING A HAND OF FRIENDSHIP TO THE DRV, ALTHOUGH NOTING THAT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS MIGHT NOT BE IN THE IMMEDIATE OFFING. THE EDITORIAL POINTED OUT THAT THE U.S., SOUTH AND NORTH VIETNAM HAD ALREADY SIGNED A PEACE AGREEMENT, THE INFERENCE BEING THAT THE THAI SHOULD DO LIKEWISE. THE EDITORIAL ALSO NOTED THAT SINCE THE RTG HAD ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLE OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT IN LAOS, AND DESIRED A NEUTRAL ZONE COMPRISING LAOS AND CAMBODIA BETWEEN THAILAND AND NORTH VIETNAM, THIS MODUS VIVENDI SHOULD RESULT IN A DECREASE IN HOSTILITIES AND IMPROVED GOOD WILL BETWEEN THAIS AND VIETNAMESE.

5. COMMENT: GOVERNMENT AND PRESS REFERENCE TO THE DESIRABILITY OF BETTERING RELATIONS WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTION DURING THE LIFE OF THE SANYA GOVERNMENT
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WHICH HAS MUCH MORE PRESSING TASKS TO CONCLUDE THAN TO EMBARK ON A COMPLEX FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVE THAT SHOWS LITTLE PROMISE OF SUCCESS. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF ORTH VIETNAMESE WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE REFUGEES. WHILE INDIRECT TALKS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE, AND DEFINITIVE MOVE FROM EITHER SIDE IS LIKELY TO BE POSTPONED UNTIL AFTER THE THAI ELECTIONS, WHICH MAY OCCUR IN MID-1974, AND UNTIL AFTER THE DRV MAKES ITS DECISION ON WHETHER TO LAUNCH ANOTHER ALL-OUT OFFENSIVE AGAINST IT HIGHER PRI-

ORITY: SOUTH VIETNAM.

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